



Department of Justice

United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton
Middle District of Florida

Tampa Orlando
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, May 21, 2010
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr>

Jacksonville Ocala Fort Myers
CONTACT: STEVE COLE
PHONE: (813) 274-6136
FAX: (813) 274-6300

**OPERATOR OF COMMERCIAL VESSEL
FINED \$725,000 FOR OIL-POLLUTION-RELATED CRIME**

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that defendant Aksay Denizcilik Ve Ticaret A.S. ("Aksay"), a Turkish corporation, pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge Richard A. Lazzara to knowingly failing to maintain an Oil Record Book, which tracks oil pollutant discharge. Judge Lazzara sentenced Askay to three years' probation and a \$725,000 fine and ordered it to participate in an Environmental Compliance Plan.

Federal and international law requires that all ships comply with pollution regulations requiring the proper disposal of oily waste water and sludge by passing the oily waste through an oil-water separator aboard the vessel or burning the sludge in the ship's incinerator. Federal law also requires the ship's crew to record accurately in an Oil Record Book each transfer or disposal of oily waste water and sludge. These laws are designed to prevent pollution of ocean waters.

According to the plea agreement, Aksay operated the commercial vessel *M/T Kerim* between at least 2006 and 2009. On March 24, 2009, the U.S. Coast Guard, based on information from several of the *Kerim's* crew members, boarded and inspected the *Kerim* at the Port of Tampa and discovered a "magic pipe" used to bypass the ship's oil pollution

prevention equipment. Officers and crew members, acting on behalf of Aksay, had constructed and used the pipe to discharge oil sludge directly into the ocean. The “magic pipe” discharges were not recorded in the *Kerim’s* Oil Record Book.

United States Attorney Albritton stated, “It is clear that we must be vigilant and seek out those who violate laws intended to prevent damage to our environment. This is the third environmental pollution case in the last year that our office has prosecuted, and we will continue to make those who pollute pay for damage to our waters.”

This case was investigated by the United States Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency. It was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Kenneth E. Nelson of the Environmental and National Resources Division of the Department of Justice and Assistant United States Attorney Terry A. Zitek.

This case is the latest in a number of prosecutions in the Middle District of Florida concerning pollutant discharge. In June 2009, the Korean corporation STX Pan Ocean Co., Ltd., which operated the commercial cargo ship *M/V Ocean Jane*, was sentenced to a \$2.2 million fine for conspiring to falsify and falsifying environmental compliance records. In February 2009, the Japanese corporation Hiong Guan Navegacion Japan Co., Ltd., which operated the commercial cargo ship *M/V Balsa-62*, was sentenced to \$1.75 million in penalties for conspiring to falsify and falsifying environmental compliance records.